

Playwrights Local 4181
Presents



To the Orchard

By Les Hunter
Directed by Dale Heinen

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Despite its blue-collar roots, Cleveland has always been defined for me by the avant-garde stylings of its underground bands of the 1970s: Pere Ubu, the Styrenes, the Dead Boys, the electric eels, and more. These groups helped put our city on the aesthetic map, and paved the way for countless others that followed. As those old musos will tell you, though, there wasn't much support for them at first. There were few venues for original music then, and no sense that local bands could compete with "real" ones from the media centers. Those intrepid artists had to will themselves into existence, and by doing so they initiated a rich tradition of Northeast Ohio experimentalism--a true point of pride in the creative legacy of our region--that continues today.

The point of that digression, of course, is that this is the same situation faced by our playwrights now. There are some smaller outlets for original work here and there--God bless 'em--but no organization dedicated to it. In fact, there's never been a theater in the Cleveland area devoted to locally written plays, at least to the knowledge of everyone we asked. The mission of Playwrights Local 4181 is to fill that enormous void once and for all. The vision of Playwrights Local 4181 is to help galvanize the many great dramatic writers living and lurking in our area toward creating their own scene of lasting vitality.

We present ourselves as a "playwrights' center," and by that we mean we develop plays (and playwrights), produce plays, and otherwise provide our dramatists with a long-needed home. We also offer classes, host projects in the community, and arrange special events such as our forthcoming celebration of Mac Wellman, a Cleveland product whose impact on the playwriting world has gone unrecognized here for far too long. For the audiences of Northeast Ohio, we provide a style of playwright-driven theater found in New York and Chicago, but to this point missing from their stages. All of our presentations--from the smallest workshop to the largest production--are charged with the unmistakable energy of all-new, all-locally created work.

Thanks for attending our first-ever full production. We're glad you can join us as we embark on this wild ride.

David Todd,
Artistic Director

Playwrights Local 4181 Presents

TO THE ORCHARD

BY LES HUNTER

DIRECTED BY DALE HEINEN

MAY 27 - JUNE 12, 2016

CAST

KELSEY ANGEL BAEHRENS

Rachael Bergman/August Belmont

ANDREA BELSER

Tracie Braggs/Virginia Woolf

ROBERT BRANCH

Simcha Bergman

MICHAEL REGNIER

Rabbi Isidore/Robert Plant

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives.

-Audre Lorde, Poetry is Not a Luxury

TO THE ORCHARD WILL HAVE ONE FIFTEEN MINUTE INTERMISSION

SETTING:

This play takes place over the second half of the thirty-day Jewish ritual of mourning known as *shloshim*.

The video and/or audio recording of this performance
by any means whatsoever is strictly prohibited.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Most of us have felt a tension between who we are and who we think we should be at some point in our lives. The characters in *To the Orchard* are in the throes of negotiating their pasts with their desired futures. We can imagine that future as a colorful orchard where we're solidly rooted, but can still spread, grow and flourish. It's an idealized space where we can pursue our true desires without having to sever the sustaining roots of our family, community, religion or values.

These roots form intricate personal histories that stretch across oceans and generations. One of the large questions the play implicitly asks is how do Jews begin to heal the generational wounds that bind them to their forbears? How can the Jewish people live up to the sacrifices of those who preceded them? That history, and the presence of the dead and our promises to them, lend this story a transitional quality.

Triggering the story is the unseen death of Rive, Rachel's Orthodox Jewish mother and Simcha's wife. We never meet Rive, but in the Jewish tradition, the division between body and soul is not always immediate. In this view, one enters and leaves the world by degrees as the soul ascends. So Rive is still near when the play starts, and in the stages of early grief, the world can feel rather surreal to those left behind. These ideas have guided some of our design decisions and helped to create the world of the play. What's imagined and what's real are a little blurred, and the characters are touched by magical forces. Some objects have greater importance than others. Certain laws of the universe can be broken; the playwright has explored those boundaries in this production.

The orchard turns out to be elusive. Getting what we want is hard. Life damages us; we fail. But also, to quote novelist Veronica Roth, "We can be mended. We mend each other."

--Dale Heinen

SUPPORT

Funding for this production is provided, in part, by the Arch and Bruce Brown Foundation and Baldwin Wallace University. Funding for Playwrights Local 4181 is provided by The AHS Foundation and The George Gund Foundation.

**THE GEORGE GUND
FOUNDATION**

The AHS Foundation

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Les Hunter (Playwright) wrote for all three parts of the *Jackson Heights Trilogy* (Theatre 167, NYC). Selected other plays include *Cyrano de Bergen County*, *New Jersey* (published, Playscripts), and *Biggest Break* (Artistic New Directions, NYC).

Les teaches English and theater at Baldwin Wallace University, is a member of the Playwrights GYM at Dobama Theatre, is the former Curator of New Plays at LaGuardia Performing Arts Center in New York, and a previous participant of the Mellon School of

Theater and Performance Research at Harvard University. Les would like to thank David, Dale, Elana, PL4181 and the entire cast and crew for their inspiring work on this play.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Dale Heinen is an award-winning director and dramaturg who lived in London, UK from 2000 – 2014. A returned Cleveland native, Dale is currently working on two new writing projects at Cleveland Public Theatre, and also teaches for Lake Erie College and the Cleveland Play House. Before London she lived in Dublin, Ireland, where she worked as assistant director to Sir Alan Stanford at the Gate, and Chicago, where she was the Artistic Director of an off-Loop theatre for 7 years. In London, she was an Associate at Soho Theatre, a new writing theatre in the West End, and she continues to develop plays on a freelance basis with writers and producers in the UK/US. Dale has been a frequent panelist for UK playwriting awards such as the Verity Bargate Award, the Westminster Prize and the Oxford University New Play Festival. She has directed new work in Chicago, Cleveland, New York, London and Glasgow, and has taught playwriting and acting at universities and theatres in London and Brazil. Dale has a BA from Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) and an MFA in theatre



PRODUCTION STAFF

DIRECTOR

Dale Heinen

COSTUME DESIGNER

Inda Blatch-Geib

SCENIC DESIGNER

Laura Carlson Tarantowski

PROP MASTER

Heather K. Pederson

LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jonathan Maag

PRODUCTION MANAGER/ASM

Francesca Mamlin

SOUND DESIGNER

Daniel McNamara

STAGE MANAGER

Megan Mingus

ASST. DIRECTOR/ASM

Eric James Dahl

CARPENTER

Paul Kit

PROJECTIONS

T. Paul Lowry

PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL 4181 STAFF

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

David M. Todd

DIRECTOR IN RESIDENCE

Dale Heinen

MANAGING DIRECTOR

Thomas W. Hayes

OUTREACH ASSOCIATE

Michael J. Geither

TEACHING ARTIST

Arwen M. Mitchell

ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE

Jaclyn C. Cifranic

PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL 4181 MISSION

Playwrights Local 4181 is dedicated to supporting the dramatists of Northeast Ohio. As a playwrights' development and production center, we foster diverse talents and present locally written works.

SPECIAL THANKS

Amy Callahan and Waterloo Arts; Nathan Motta, Jonathan Wilhelm, and Dobama Theatre; Paul Kit; Mark and Patricia Averbach; Elana Averbach; Inda Blatch-Geib; Debra Caplan; Rabbi Steve Segar; Julie Rubinstein; Angie Sohlberg; Sydell Levine; John C. Williams; Janet Cox; Charna Sherman; Jennifer Gomez.

CAST

Kelsey Angel Baehrens (*Rachel Bergman/August Belmont*) is stoked to be working on an original Les Hunter work and to be growing with Playwrights Local 4181. Entering her final year at Baldwin Wallace University, she studies acting, directing, and creative writing. Her most recent Baldwin Wallace credits include Harper in *Angels in America: Part 1, Millennium Approaches* (nominated for the Irene Ryan Awards), Barbara Allen in *Dark of the Moon*, and Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet*. She recently made her professional Cleveland debut as Camila in *In the Heights* at Beck Center. Aloha across the sea to her own mostly functional ohana.



Andrea Belser (*Tracie Braggs/Virginia Woolf*) is a native of Cleveland with a B.A. in Theater Studies and Vocal Music from Wright State University. Currently, she teaches various dance and musical theater/dramatic arts to students of all ages. You may have last seen her perform as Helena in *Prince Ivan and the Firebird* (Talespinner Children's Theatre), Negro Woman in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Mamai Theatre), or Pinkey Carr in *Johanna: Facing Forward* (Cleveland Public Theatre). She has also been awarded 2008 Best Actress in Cleveland and nominated for

the same in 2012. She dedicates her performance to loved ones lost and credits her biggest fans: her mother and her fiancé.

Robert Branch (*Simcha Bergman*) has just come from Tri-C East where he assayed the role of a very famous religious leader—the man who married *Romeo and Juliet*—Friar Lawrence. Just before that (we're talking days) Rob was trodding the boards alone at convergence-continuum where he played the Shopkeeper who battled space invading cockroaches in Samuel Amazing's *The Last Stand on Mango Street*. Just before that (we're talkin' hours) Rob played Julian Quintana who battled spaced-out Hollywood filmmakers who acted like cockroaches in Matt Pelfrey's insanely funny play *Pure Shock Value*.



CAST



Michael Regnier (*Rabbi Isidore/Robert Plant*) has been a professional actor for more than thirty years. Michael has appeared in more than 100 roles at Cleveland area theaters, was a resident member of Ken Albers' Actors Company (seven seasons) Cleveland SignStage Theatre (eighteen years) and once a Hermit Club Stage-regular. He was most recently seen onstage at Cesear's Forum in Peter Weiss' *The Investigation*; at Beck Center in Horton Foote's *Young Man From Atlanta*; at Ensemble Theatre in Rajiv Joseph's *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*; and at Talespinner Children's Theatre in Anne McEvoy's *Clara and the Nutcracker*. Michael will be featured this summer in Fanny Burney's *The Woman Hater* at Mamai Theatre Company. Michael presently appears daily at Animal Zen in Cleveland Heights. He is an inveterate, impenitent collector. Sunguidess beauty Juliette – mystic seer, songbird actress, playwright and director – is his wife and life-unifier, and Grover-the-bullmastiff's spoiler. Beloved children are in Cleveland, Chicago, and Taos. Thank-you, Love, God of the Universe!

PRODUCTION STAFF

Laura Carlson Tarantowski (*Scenic Designer*)

Laura Carlson Tarantowski holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in theater from Georgia's Brenau University, a Master of Fine Arts in set design from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and over 20 years of professional experience in production design and set-painting. She has worked extensively with local favorites Near West Theatre and Dobama Theater. Recent designs include *Show Boat* at Near West Theatre, *Psycho Beach Party* and *Family Happiness* at Oberlin College, *The Call* and *The Realistic Joneses* at Dobama Theater and *Metamorphoses* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* for the Case Western Reserve - Cleveland Playhouse MFA Acting Program.

Jonathan Maag (*Lighting Designer*)

Jonathan is currently serving as Assistant Technical Director: Lighting & Sound for Oberlin College's Theater and Dance Departments. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Favorite Past Designs: *Spirits to Enforce* at Cleveland Public Theatre. *Les Miserables*, *Dreamgirls*, *Cinderella*, *A Few Good Men*, *The Farnsworth Invention*, *Lombard*, *Althea's Well* at Fort Wayne Civic Theatre. *Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz* at Cortland Repertory Theatre. *Guys and*

Dolls, Snow White, The Little Mermaid at Allenberry Playhouse. *Miss Witherspoon* and *Cognizance* at Miami University.

Daniel McNamara (*Sound Designer*)

Daniel McNamara is an Interdisciplinary Theater and Performance Artist who currently calls Cleveland home, and is an inaugural Kulas Composer Fellow at Cleveland Public Theatre for the 15/16 Season. His most recent project was as Composer and Sound Designer for Teatro Publico's production of *UZ*. Before that he performed in the world premier of *Incendiaries* at Cleveland Public Theatre. In May of 2015, he completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies at Cleveland State University, with minors in Music, English and Psychology. His capstone projects were in masked theater and electronic music. From 2010-2014 his primary artistic pursuit was presenting his compositions, choreographies, poems, paintings, masks, and stories to the public as Puppet Shows and Parades with the company he co-founded The Possibilitarian Puppet Theater - with national and international tours. From 2005-2010 he was Musical Director, and Resident Company member of the Bread and Puppet Theater based in Glover, Vermont. From 2003-2004 he was composing, recording, writing for the indie pop-rock project "Fire Engine Yellow," and the experimental group "Up Is Down" in Boston, MA. For the 2016-17 academic year, he has been offered a Creative Impact Full-Ride Scholarship to a Master of Arts in Creative Process through Uversity, a new and innovative Interdisciplinary Arts program established through the National University of Ireland.

Inda Batch-Gleib (*Costume Designer*)

Inda Blatch-Geib's work as a costume and production designer for over 600 theatrical, commercial, and film releases has spanned 30 years and crossed 4 continents including work off-Broadway and for The Colombian National Opera. Current commercial projects include Costume Design for The Cleveland Cavaliers' Jumbotron and two national spots for the team. Upcoming Production Design credits include the Showtime Original film *The Con*. Her print design has included set styling for *Harper's Bazaar* UK Scarlett Johansson cover and spread as well as catalogue set styling for *Foundations* and *Kilgore Trout*. Inda's designs have been highlighted at The National Inventor's Hall of Fame/Smithsonian Institute 'Exercising Ingenuity' exhibit as well as in national commercials for Microsoft, McDonald's, Under Armour, and Momenive. Recent film projects include Ohio Art Direction for *The Signal* starring Laurence Fishburne. Music Video Production and Costume Design includes Machine Gun Kelly's *Alpha Omega* release. Theatrical productions include Costume Design for a multi-city national release of the Broadway bound *Kris Kringle*.

Eric James Dahl (*Assistant Director/Assistant Stage Manager*)

Eric is a senior at Baldwin Wallace focusing on directing and playwriting, and has been seen on stage in *Big Love* (Leo,) *Henry IV Part Two* (Prince Hal,) *Dark of the Moon* (Hank Guder,) and *Romeo & Juliet* (Paris.) He recently worked as the assistant director for BW's *Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches* and directed *Enter the Spokeswoman*, *Gently* for BW's 10 Minute Play Festival.

Francesca Mamlin (*Production Manager/Assistant Stage Manager*)

Francesca Mamlin is absolutely thrilled to be working with Playwright's Local 4181. Francesca has just completed her third year at Baldwin Wallace University where she is studying theatre with a focus in stage management. Francesca has stage managed numerous shows at her university, the most recent being *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Big Love*, and *The (in)Complete History of Theatre*. This summer, Francesca will be working as a production manager and production stage manager at the Bay View Music Festival in Petoskey, Michigan where she will work on *Evita* and *La Cenerentola*.

Megan Mingus (*Stage Manager*)

This is Megan's first production with Playwrights Local 4181 and is very honored to be working on such a wonderful project. Megan graduated from Kent State University and has been working around Cleveland, Northeast Ohio and Utah for the past eight years. She is currently the Resident Stage Manager at Dobama Theatre, the Scenic Artist at the Cleveland Play House and the Assistant Company Manager for Porthouse Theater. She would like to thank her family, Playwrights Local, the cast, crew and design team for making this such a wonderful process and a special thank you to you the patrons, for supporting live theater. Thank you and enjoy the show!

T. Paul Lowry (*Projections*)

T. Paul Lowry has served in artistic, production and design capacities with such companies as Long Wharf Theatre, Playwrights Horizons, New Haven Theater Company, Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, International Festival of Arts and Ideas, Cleveland Public Theatre, Theatre Ninjas, Near West Theatre, Talespinner Children's Theatre, Ingenuity Festival and Celebrity Cruises. Noted recent design work includes *Fire on the Water*, *Johanna: Facing Forward* (CPT), *Uz* (TPC), *The Turing Machine* (Theatre Ninjas, received a 2016 Cleveland Critic's Circle Award for Best Projection Design), *Carmina Burana* (GroundWorks Dance Theatre), *Run to the Capulets*, *Raise up the Montagues* (NHTC, Tri-C), and *Brite Winter 2016*. You can learn more about his work at www.tpaulowry.com.

Paul Kit (*Carpenter/Set Build*)

Paul is a relative newcomer to theatre productions. His background is mechanical

engineering. He got his start as carpenter and assistant technical director for two seasons at Ensemble Theatre in Cleveland Heights. He constructed sets for 10 shows in the 2013 and 2014 seasons including *The Iceman Cometh*, *Animals Out of Paper* and *Beyond The Horizon*. He manages an engineering service company in Euclid, plays in an ice hockey league, builds furniture out of recycled wood pallets and enjoys going out to local theatres with his wife, Michele. “Give me a description, a sketch on a napkin, whatever the medium, and I can build from there.”

Heather Pederson (*Prop Master*)

Heather K. Pederson’s passion for the theater was first sparked when she participated in her school’s production of *Annie*. She played an orphan and it was one of the greatest experiences of her young life. She later went on to run the soundboard at her high school’s theater productions and in college ended up changing her major from business to Recording Arts and Technology with a concentration in theater. After running the soundboard for two seasons at the Tri-C Metro Campus, she went on to run follow spots and ASM for the North Coast Men’s Choir and various jobs at the Near West Theater and the Beck Center for the Arts. She is thrilled to be working her first ever prop master position with the Local 4181 and is looking forward to what the theater future holds for her.

Individual Contributors

\$5000 +

Stephen and Rita Todd

\$1000+

Mike Geither and Jaime Bouvier

Thomas Hayes

David Todd

\$500+

Grant and Laura Cleveland

\$100+

Richard Bongorno

Genevieve Costanzo

Les Hunter

Michael Laurenty

Arwen Mitchell

Up to \$100

David and Roberta Bongorno

Cathleen Carey

Johnny Mango World Cafe & Bar

Faye Sholiton

PLAYWRIGHTS LOCAL 4181

2016 - 2017 SEASON

August 2016

Objectively/Reasonable:

A Community Response to the
Shooting of Tamir Rice, 11/22/14

Written by Playwrights Local
Directed by Terrence Spivey

November 2016

The 2nd Annual Cleveland Playwrights Festival

January 2017

This is NOT About My Dead Dog

Written by Amy Schwabauer
Directed by Dale Heinen

March 2017

The Mac Wellman Homecoming Festival:

A three-day celebration of the
Cleveland-born playwrighting
innovator

April 2017

2017 Play Lab + Spring Workshops

May 2017

Things As They Are

Written by David Todd
Directed by Anjanette Hall
Original score by
Ben Chasny